Three Ancient Kingdoms of East Asia

— A Very Short Story —

O. Guy Morley

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Once upon a time, there were three kingdoms in East Asia: Chinadom, Koreadom, and Japandom.

After many years of his reign, the emperor of Chinadom was finally facing his own death. But he was determined to take everything and everyone with him wherever he goes. So, he ordered that everything and everyone accompany him to the world after death. The prime minister was not quite ready for this. He still wanted to enjoy the rest of his life. So, he secretly replaced the emperor's order. The new order was to create thousands and thousands of mud soldiers and horses. When the emperor finally died, the mud soldiers and horses along with many other artifacts were buried with the emperor. With the newly acquired skills to manufacture a huge number of products, the kingdom became the world's biggest exporter.

Many years later, the emperor of Koreadom was facing his own death. He became uncontrollably sad and emotional. He kept singing and singing sad songs to himself. Still, he was not completely satisfied. So, he ordered that all the singers of the kingdom to gather at the palace and sing every possible sad song for the emperor ... forever, even after his death. The emperor died and eventually, the singers died as well. But their offspring and descendants continued to sing sad songs for the emperor and themselves. As a result, the kingdom became legendary for its ballad singers and sad songs.

Still many years later, the emperor of Japandom was facing his own death. Suffering from all sorts of natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and typhoons, he had to accept the fact that everyone must die. In order to sustain his and his subjects' vulnerable lives, he ordered the kingdom's doctors to prolong people's lives as long as possible ... no matter what, paying no attention to the quality of life. He also realized the profound fact that deaths exist only because of births. But he did not want to limit the number of offspring by law. So, he issued an order that his subjects clearly understand all sorts of burdens associated with child raising. This way, he expected that his subjects would reduce the number of children on their own. Soon, the kingdom became well-known for its rapidly graying population.

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